

THE REMINISCENCES OF CARL SCHURZ
listed at Detroit, Michigan, which was offered to
me—I might
almost say, urged upon me—by Senator
Zachariah Chandler*
IE the meantime I had occasion to witness the
beginning of the
political war between the executive and the
legislative power
concerning the reconstruction of the "States
lately in
rebellion."

I am sure I do not exaggerate when I say
that this political
war has been one of the most unfortunate
events in the
history of this republic, for it made the most
important problem
of the time, a problem of extraordinary
complexity which
required the calmest, most delicate and
circumspect treatment,
—a foot-ball of a personal and party brawl which
was in the
highest degree apt to inflame the passions and to
obscure the
judgment of everybody concerned in it. Since my
return from
the South, the evil effects of Mr. Johnson's
conduct in en-
couraging the reactionary spirit prevalent among
the Southern
whites, had become more and more evident and
alarming from
day to day. Charles Sumner told me that his
personal experi-
ences with the President had been very much like
mine. When
Simmer left Washington in the spring he had
received from
Mr. Johnson at repeated interviews the most
emphatic. assur-
ances that he would do nothing to precipitate
the restoration
of the " States lately in rebellion " to the full
exercise of self-
governing functions, and even that he favored the
extension of

the suffrage to the freedmen. The two men had parted with all the appearance of a perfect friendly understanding. But when the Senator returned to Washington in the late autumn, that understanding seemed to have entirely vanished from the President's mind and had given place to an irritated temper and a certain acerbity of tone in the assertion of the "President's policy." From various other members of Congress I heard the same story. Mr. Johnson, strikingly unlike Abra-